116, 176, 181

"Mr. Anderson, the first man who described these people, was not favourably impressed with their intellectual powers, and he records his opinion as follows (Cook's Third Voy. Bk. I. ch. vi. p. 45): 'With respect to personal activity or genius we can say but little of either. They do not seem to possess the first in any remarkable degree, and for the last, they have, to appearance, less than even the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego, who, though furnished with the materials, have not invention sufficient to make clothing for themselves.... Their expressing no surprise at seeing men so unlike themselves, their indifference to our presents, and their general inattention, were sufficient proofs of their not possessing any acuteness of understanding.' He continues: 'The inhabitants had little of that fierce or wild appearance common to people in their situation; but seemed mild and cheerful, without reserve or jealousy of strangers.' But some of the settlers looked upon them as little better than wild animals. Thus Lloyd (ch. iv. p. 43) says: 'Their moral and intellectual energies were of the most inferior order.' Prinsep says much the same (p. 79): 'They are undoubtedly in the lowest possible scale of human nature, both in form and intellect,' and Wentworth is equally emphatic (p. 115) in a like opinion: 'The aboringines of this country are, if possible, still more barbarous and uncivilized than those of New Holland.'"

1: Roth--29-30 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 176, 181

"Captain Dumoutier, who had, however, little opportunity for observation, says of them (ch. xii. p. 217): 'The Tasmanians, among whom the human form is most degraded, must be placed nearly at the bottom step of the ladder in the human race. One can say that there is not a trace of any civilization. They are groups of savage men, living almost like animals, unless contact with Europeans has exerted any influence upon them;' while Jeffreys (pp. 118 and 126) only allows that they were less barbarous than the natives of New Holland. Breton, on the other hand, [30] thinks the latter superior (pp. 348-349): 'They are very different to the New Hollanders, and, if possible, even more barbarous, approaching nearer to the "mere animal" than the former... From whatever part of the world they may have come, these people must have deteriorated, as a nation so utterly savage can scarcely be found elsewhere.' Dixon says (p. 22): 'They were sunk in the grossest barbarism, and apparently had not made one move in the progress of civilization;' but he immediately afterwards qualifies his opinion by stating on the following page: 'They have been designated as the lowest order of human beings, removed but one shade from brutality; but I think unjustly, ... their routine of life was so simple, and required so little ingenuity to maintain it, that their exhibiting any intellectual vivacity at all argued the possession of a considerable amount of latent capacity.'"

"Mr. Dove, who had charge of them at the settlement, and therefore ample opportunity for observation, remarks (I. p. 249): 'The aborigines of Tasmania have been usually regarded as exhibiting the human character in the lowest state of degradation.... If we look, however, to the methods they devised of procuring shelter and subsistence in their native wilds; to the skill and precision with which they tracked the mazes of the bush; and to the force of invention and of memory which is displayed in the copious vocabulary of their several languages, they claim no inconsiderable share of mental power and activity.' Finally an anonymous writer (? Ross) in the Van Diemen's Land Annual for 1834 (pp. 77-78) says: 'Although low in the scale of human beings, sufficient had been presented by the occasional intercourse between themselves and the Europeans to arrive at the conclusion that the nature of their intellectual powers was by no means questionable. They have frequently shown themselves endowed with great quickness of perception or an acuteness in the sense, not unusually bestowed by Providence ... to supply other deficiencies.'"

(No date) 1890 Tasmanians

"West's opinion of them was (II. p. 88), 'Their intellectual character is low; yet not so inferior as often described. They appeared stupid, when addressed on subjects which had no relation to their mode of life; but they were quick and cunning within their own sphere. Their locomotion sharpened their powers of observation, without much increasing their ideas.' Backhouses' opinion was very similar (pp. 173-174), 'After having seen something of the natives of Van Diemen's Land, the conviction was forced upon my mind, that they exceeded Eurpoeans in skill, in those things to which their attention had been directed from childhood.' Melville (p. 348) bears witness to a like effect: 'They occasionally afforded sufficient proof that their intellectual powers were of no mean order.'"

"We are however indebted to two eminent Frenchmen for the fullest details which throw light on the intelligence or of the want of it in these natives. MM. La Billardière and Péron who visited the island within ten years of each other (1792 and 1803 respectively) have left such minute records of their intercourse with the aborigines of Tasmania before the days of settlement that we cannot do better than reproduce their accounts as fully as space permits of. Commencing with La Billardière, the first explorer, we find his companions had some difficulty in opening communication, as on their approach the natives fled away with precipitation (I. ch. v. pp. 181-211). At last, 'Two of the [32] officers of our vessel... determined to land.... They found four savages employed in laying fuel upon three small fires.... The savages immediately fled, notwithstanding all the signs of amity which they made them.... One of these savages... having left behind him a small basket ... was bold enough to come quite near to Crétin [one of the officers] in order to fetch it, with a look of assurance with which his bodily strength seemed to inspire him' (I. ch. v. pp. 221-222). Then when a boat landed, 'the natives, who, notwithstanding all the signs of amity they made them, would not let them come within two hundred paces distance of him' (ibid. ch. v. p. 223). Similar results were recorded the following day (ch. v. p. 225). Finally we are told (ch. v. pp. 233-234), 'One of the officers ... met six of them [natives] walking slowly towards the south.... Their surprise at so unexpected an encounter was visible in their countenances; but their numbers inspiring them with courage, they approached at the invitation of the European, and bound

round their heads a handkerchief and neck-cloth which he offered them. They, however, appeared terrified at the sight of his hanger, which he showed them how to use; nor were their fears quieted till he made them a present of it. He endeavoured in vain to persuade them to come to the place where our ships lay at anchor: the savages walked away... in a direction ... opposite to that which led to the shore. Some of our men, having landed on the other side of the strait, came to a large fire round which eight savages ... sat warming themselves.... They immediately ran away as soon as they saw our people. An old woman, who had the care of their provisions, which she did not choose to leave behind her, was soon overtaken by some of the sailors. She accepted with an air of satisfaction a handkerchief which was given her, but was so terrified at the sight of a hanger, which they presented to her, that she leapt down a precipice more than forty [sic] feet in height, and ran away amongst the rocks, where they soon lost sight of her.' After this 'they discovered a number of the savages landing from a raft. As timid as those we had seen before, they had hastened with all possible speed to the land, where they made their escape into the woods' (ch. v. p. 230)."

1: Roth--49-50
116, 181

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"Regarding their courage, Laplace says (III. ch. xviii. p. 197): 'They make up for the courage and physical force which is lacking in them by cunning and an incredible agility.' Burnet (Arthur, Colonies and Slaves, Van Diemen's Land, p. 35) also says in evidence before the Commission that they are quite [50] undistinguished by personal courage. Other evidence (Govern. Ord., Colonies and Slaves, Van Diemen's Land, p. 66) would seem to confirm this: 'The native tribes of this island are well known to be, with a few exceptions, extremely timid, flying with precipitation at the appearance of two or three armed persons, yet the numerous attacks they have made on defenceless habitations, and the cruel murders they have committed with impunity on the white population, have had the effect of rendering them daily more bold and crafty.' But on the other hand Breton (p. 355) allows that: 'It is universally admitted in the colony, that these children of the wilderness are not deficient in courage, and are wont to show each other fair play, not seeming at all inclined to avail themselves of any unfair advantage,'...."

1: Roth--50 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 609

"...Cook's people found them absolutely without fear, for, as Anderson records (Third Voy. Bk. I. ch. vi.): 'They approached us from the woods wothout betraying any marks of fear, or rather with the greatest confidence imaginable, for none of them had any weapons, except one, who held in his hand a small stick. When, however, the officer of that party fired a musket in the air, it sent them off with the greatest precipitation. [But the next day] we had not been long landed, before about twenty of them, men and boys, joined us, without expressing the least sign of fear or distrust.' Holman recording what he heard says: 'They seem to have but little fear of death' (IV. ch. xii. p. 405). But during the war of extermination it was said (Minutes Ex. Coun. Colonies and Slaves, Van Diemen's Land, p. 11): 'Such is the distrust of the aboriginal natives, that it seems they invariably fly from any two or three armed persons.'"

"We have seen how difficult the French discoverers found it to open communication with the natives, nor were they at all singular in this respect. Mortimer, for instance, gives us the following account of an interview (pp. 18-20): 'Our third mate on landing, saw several of them [natives] moving off. He approached them alone and unarmed, making every sign of friendship his fancy could suggest; but though they mimicked his actions exactly, and laughed heartily, he could not prevail upon them to stay. The next morning, as we approached the shore, we observed several natives walking among the trees. When they perceived we had landed, and were pretty near them, they began to chatter very loud and walk away; upon which we called to them, imitating their noise as well as we could, and had the satisfaction to see them stop at a little distance from us. Several of them having long poles or [51] spears in their hands, we made signs to them to throw them aside, with which they immediately complied; and in return we put away our muskets. They now suffered us to come so near them as to take some biscuit, a pen-knife, and other trifles from us; but they took great care to avoid being touched. Some of them, indeed, would not accept of anything unless it was thrown to them; and the whole party kept edging off by degrees. They seemed eager to procure everything they saw; and had a great inclination for our hats. Mr. Cox gave one of them a silk handkerchief, and in return he threw him a fillet of skin which he wore tied round his head. The party which

we saw consisted of about fourteen or fifteen men and women, but there were several more concealed among the trees. Upon the whole, they seemed to us to be a timorous, harmless race of people, and afford a fine picture of human nature in its most rude and uncultivated state. We spent some time in endeavouring to inspire these poor people with confidence; but though they appeared to be very merry, laughing and mimicking our actions, and frequently repeating the words, Warra, Warra, Wai, they kept retiring very fast, and we soon lost them among the trees. Being willing to, if possible, see something more of these singular people, we followed the track they had taken. We saw a smoke on the opposite side of the island, and made all the haste we could to come up with it; but the natives had fled before our arrival.' Bass's experience was very similar:

'Their extreme shyness prevented any communication. As soon as the boat approached the shore, they ran into the woods' (Collins, ch. xv. p. 168)."

"'There is similar variety of talent, and of temper, among the Tasmanian aborigines, to what is to be found among other branches of the human family,' so says Backhouse (p. 174); while West (II. p. 89) describes the natives as variable from ignorance and distrust; probably from mental puerility: thus, their war whoop and defiance were soon succeeded by shouts of laughter.'"

1: Roth--62-63 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 609

"'Natives in Van Diemen's Land are not so brave as those in New South Wales; they are more cruel and treacherous. If they were ever so well used, they would turn upon those that fed them; the women visit the stock-huts as spies, and then the men attack them' (Hobbs, p. 50). Evidence of Mr. Kelly: 'Has been a great deal among the natives; found they were generally met by them in a friendly manner, but upon leaving them they would attempt to spear them.
...They were always friendly at meeting, but treacherous at parting; noticed this whenever he met them... At Port Davey the natives enticed a boat to put in; received bread from the crew, and when it was departing, threw spears at it, and speared one man' (p. 51). 'The natives are grateful for kindness' (Bedford, p. 51). 'Mr. Brodribb was not inclined to think that the whites were the first aggressors, nor did he think that the intercourse between the native women and the whites caused any resentment in the minds of the native men' (p. 53). Evidence of the Rev. R. Knopweed: 'The first white man who was murdered by the natives was George Munday; he was out hunting; I believe at that time if any person had been surprised in the bush [63] unarmed, the natives would have murdered him. Munday had fed the man who speared him...; conceives this treacherous and ungrateful disposition prevailed amongst all the natives' (p. 53)."

116, 181, 609

"'A chief, with nine other men, having been induced to come to the house of Mr. Bateman, were treated by him 'with the utmost kindness, distributing to them clothing and food; they were placed under no restraint.... Mr. Bateman... was, with his family, most assiduous in cultivating the best understanding; but, after remaining with him eight or nine days, they silently withdrew in the dead of the night, robbing Mr. Bateman of everything they could lay their hands upon, and in their progress plundering every hut, and spearing every white man who had the misfortune to encounter them.... Eumarrah, the chief of the Stoney Creek Tribe, was captured two years ago; for some time after his capture he was narrowly watched, but by his apparently artless manner, and strong protestations of attachment, he was gradually confided in more and more.... I have...personally satisfied myself that he fully understood that the wishes of the Government were those of kindness and benevolence towards his race.... I entrusted him to conduct a party of natives, assuring him that they should be clothed, and fed, and protected; but to my disappointment and sincere regret, he availed himself of the first moment to abscond, and has, I fear, rejoined his tribe, with the most hostile intentions' (Arthur, pp. 58-59). 'The aboriginal natives of this island not only are without sense of the obligation of promises, but appear to be insensible to acts of kindness.' (Min. Ex. Council, p. 64)."

1: Roth--63-64 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 721

"Melville says (p. 349): 'Some of the tribes were much more ferocious than others--the greater number were remarkably quiet and tractable,' and Lloyd: 'The men... were artful to a degree, and possessed of a most unamiable and morose expression of countenance' (p. 44). Holman (IV. ch. xii. pp. 404-405) states: 'An instance of humane consideration among them is, that, in the gratification of revenge for any injury they have received, they generally spare the children of those whom they have destined to be their victims;' but on p. 425 he gives an account of a murder by some aborigines, in which no such humane consideration was shown: 'A barbarous murder was perpetrated by them... which will serve to show the savage nature of their dispositions. A settler having left his hut to perform some work at a little distance, his wife took a walk into the garden with a child in her arms, when some natives, who no doubt had watched the departure of her [64] husband, rushed forward, and instantly despatched both her and her child with a shower of spears, after which they robbed the hut and made their escape.'"

1: Roth--64 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 262, 201.

"Mr. Leigh says, the aborigines 'are peaceable towards those who use them well, but revengeful of injuries' (III. p. 242), and West (II. p. 89): 'They were cruel in their resentment, but not prone to violence; ... they were not ungrateful, especially for medical relief.... The English were seen by some friendly natives to draught the toad fish, which is poison, and by which several have perished; the natives, perceiving its preparation for food, endeavoured to show, by gestures, that it was not to be eaten, and exhibited its effects by the semblance of death.' La Billardière mentions the case of a native who expressed his gratitude for a cock given him by pointing to the bird on his shoulder (II. ch. x. p. 66)."

1: Roth--64 [2] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 609

"The following three incidents related by Backhouse show that they had some sense of generosity for a foe, and of gratitude, even if not always exercised; 'We passed the remains of a hut that was burnt about two years ago, by the aborigines of the Ouse or Big River district. An old man named Clark lost his life in it; but a young woman escaped; she rushed from the fire and fell on her knees before the natives, one of whom extinguished the flames which had caught her clothes, and beckoned to her to go away. They killed a woman on the hill behind the hut (p. 30). Two white men... were lost in crossing a river on a raft, before the tide was out. When some of the native women saw them in danger, they swam to the raft, and begged the men to get upon their backs, and they would convey them to the shore; but the poor men refused, being overcome with fear. These kind-hearted women were greatly affected by this accident (p. 147). We visited Hugh Germain.... He came to Van Diemen's Land... at the first settlement of the colony,... [when] he says, he rarely carried a gun, though he often fell in with parties of the aborigines, in whom there was no harm' (p. 212)."

"Dr. Ross found the natives very friendly; as he says: one day 'I was alarmed by the appearance of fires in three or four situations on the opposite side of the river, and soon after, a scattered crowd of about sixty aborigines walked up to my cottage. ...I did my best to conciliate my guests--I made them as welcome as possible.... After several fruitless attempts, I succeeded in making one, who, I afterwards found, was a chief among them, sensible of the loss I should sustain if the fire were to be allowed to approach my corn or my dwelling, for it was already on my side of the river, and spreading up the bank within a few yards. We were [65] doing our best to extinguish it,...but our efforts would have been in vain,....had not the whole tribe of blacks all at once come forward to assist me. Even some hours afterwards, when the flames again broke out in two or three places, they were on the alert in a moment and put them out. I mention this incident, as it was an act of friendship on their part, and shows, that where they have not been insulted, or had cause of revenge, and are able to discriminate their friends from their foes, they are not wanting in reciprocal offices of friendship and humanity. I am convinced that had I wished it, they would have stopped with me several days, and given me any other assistance I might stand in need of, as well as dividing with me the opossums and other game they had caught in the bush (Ross, pp. 145-146). On the day following this incident, when Dr. Ross was very anxious concerning a convict servant of his,

named Cook, who had already robbed him several times, and at whose hands he feared further outrage,... these natives appeared again; and for once I felt a sort of security from having them beside me.' After describing their manner of cooking and eating a meal, he continues: 'Their natural politeness was constantly urging me to partake with them, and, not to disoblige them, both I and my child each took a leg of nicely cooked kangaroo-rat in our hands....I had scarcely entered, when the report of a gun among the natives made me hasten back.... I learned that a person, whom from the description... I readily recognized to be Cook, had been seen by the dull light of the fire, standing among the trees a few yards behind. When he found himself discovered by the natives, he shouldered his musket and fired it off, pointed to the most crowded part, as they stood or laid round the fire. Happily, it was without effect.... I was now joined by two of my own servants, and we were all, to the number of about a dozen, in instant pursuit of the runaway.... The night, however, was very dark,... we were compelled, after running about a quarter of a mile, searching all about, to give up the pursuit. Whether it was from this little incident or not, I cannot say, but henceforth an uninterrupted understanding and reciprocity of good offices subsisted between me and these wandering, and, as they afterwards proved to be, most savage blacks.... They never committed the smallest trespass or annoyance on my farm,... and while the most dreadful outrages were committed by them all round, they never once attacked my farm or anything belonging to it' (ibid. pp. 153-155)."

1: Roth--73-74
116, 758, 181

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"The Tasmanians, like some other savage races, were in the habit of abandoning the sick and infirm; Widowson informing us (p. 191), that 'those who are aged or diseased, are left in hollow trees, or under the ledges of rocks, to pine and die. Backhouse confirms this (p. 84), and further tells us that, 'when any of these people fall sick in their native state, so as to be unable to accompany the others in their daily removals, they are furnished with...food...and a bundle of the leaves of Mesembryanthemum equilaterale, ... which the natives use as a purgative; and they are left to perish, unless they recover in time to follow the others.' This custom was but the necessary result of their wandering life; for as [74] West points out (p. 90), 'their tribes could neither convey them, nor wait for their recovery.' He adds, that 'this custom was modified by circumstances, and sometimes by the relatives of the sufferer.'"

1: Roth--119 [4] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 181, 361

"Colonel Arthur refers to 'the migratory habits of the aborigines, and their attachment to their savage mode of life, as raising difficulties in the way of their settling down in any one district' (Colonies and Slaves, p. 4); and Dove years afterwards makes the same complaint: 'Such is the force of habit and association, that even yet these children of the forest gladly quit the neat and substantial cottages which have been built for them, for the luxury (as they account it) of wandering over the bush, and of reclining under the shade of a roofless bread-wind. In the hour of sickness and death, they often breathe a wish to meet the issue of their maladies amidst the wilds of Nature' (I. p. 249)."